

The Flying Gourmet

"I Heard It Through The Grape Vine"



You know the old saying "A day late and a dollar short", well I sort of feel that way about a lot of things in life. It seems what ever endeavor I get involved in I have some how missed the wave. This is certainly true with the stock market, gasoline prices and many other things. I'm scared to think that the times we are experiencing right now are someday going to be somebody's "good old days"! It use to be a dream of mine to retire and maybe have a plane of my own and a hangar where I could "hang out" and fly to breakfast, lunch, or dinner and maybe stay overnight somewhere every once in a while. Well, the cost of every thing has far exceeded my earnings and I'm not willing to sacrifice every other thing in my life to fulfill that dream. Besides, even if I was, my wife doesn't share that same dream and she wouldn't. I will just have to be content flying rented aircraft and making small excursions into the wild blue yonder chasing that perfect hamburger or that romantic dinner for two, after all "tis better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all."



I flew down to Visalia a couple of months ago. Visalia - centrally located in the heart, or is it "heat", of the San Joaquin Valley. Did you know it's the oldest town between San Francisco and

Los Angeles settled in 1852? Like every town, Visalia has some things to be proud of, maybe even more than most. Kevin Costner attended high school there and Tom Johnston (founding member of the Doobie Brothers) also hails from Visalia. And if that wasn't enough Visalia is home to the headquarters of Sun-Maid Raisins. Well actually Kingsburg, CA is the real Sun-Maid home, located half way between the Visalia and Fresno airports. At the Kingsburg location you will find the Sun-Maid Gift Store where they have a wide assortment of goodies, not just raisins. If you don't want to make the trip you can contact them on line to place an order for the holidays at

<http://altapacific.com/secure/sunmaidgs2/> .

What about that Sun-Maid maiden? She was a real person named Lorraine Collette Petersen, a seed planter and picker, from Fresno. Her likeness has been on the box since 1915. I think they have spruced her up some since 1915, but overall their packaging hasn't changed much, no sense changing something that works.

If you just want to stop at Visalia for a meal and to stretch your legs, the local Holiday Inn is the place to go. The Inn is just a 10 minute walk east of transient parking and is one of the nicest I have ever visited, swimming pool and all.